

2026 California Permit Requirements Guide

Permit fees, review timelines, and requirements for 6 of California's building jurisdictions — from official sources.

How to read this guide

Confidence badges

Every figure carries a confidence label. “Verified” means PermitBase confirmed the figure directly against the jurisdiction’s current published source. “Reviewed” covers everything else — the same figure, a lighter verification pass. We never upgrade a label past what was actually checked.

Tiered fees

Where a jurisdiction charges by project valuation, this guide prints the base/starting tier from the published fee table and points at the source for the full schedule — never a computed total.

“Not published”

When a jurisdiction does not publish a plan-review timeline, this guide says so plainly — “Not published — contact the department” — rather than estimating one.

California publishes its building standards as Title 24, adopted by state agencies and republished on a three-year cycle. A city or county may change those standards only after its governing body makes an express finding that the change is reasonably necessary because of local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions, and no change becomes operative until the finding and the change have been filed with the California Building Standards Commission.

PermitBase is an independent reference and is not affiliated with any government agency. Requirements change and vary by project — confirm current details with the building department before you submit.

California snapshot

6 California jurisdictions covered — this guide features 6 of them.

City	County	Annual units	Annual value
Fresno	Fresno County	—	—
Long Beach	Los Angeles County	—	—
Oakland	Alameda County	—	—
Sacramento	Sacramento County	—	—
San Diego	San Diego County	—	—
San Jose	Santa Clara County	—	—

Fresno

Fresno County · City of Fresno – Planning and Development Department, Building and Safety Services Division
559.621.CITY (559.621.2489), or call 311 · <https://www.fresno.gov/planning/building-and-safety/>

Permit	Fee	Review timeline	Tip
Residential Building (New Construction)	Due at permit issuance	Not published — PERMITS EXPIRE ON A 180-DAY CLOCK. Fresno quotes the code: 'Every permit issued shall become invalid unless work on the site authorized by such permit is commenced within 180 days after its issuance, or if the work is suspended or abandoned for a period of 180 days after the time the work is commenced.' An APPROVED INSPECTION resets it to 180 days from that inspection.	
Electrical	Due at permit issuance	Not published — GAS IS NAMED ALONGSIDE THE OTHER THREE in the provision Fresno quotes – electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing – so gas work is inside the same permit requirement.	
Plumbing	Due at permit issuance	Not published — GAS IS NAMED ALONGSIDE THE OTHER THREE in the provision Fresno quotes – electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing – so gas work is inside the same permit requirement.	
Mechanical / HVAC	Due at permit issuance	Not published — GAS IS NAMED ALONGSIDE THE OTHER THREE in the provision Fresno quotes – electrical, gas, mechanical or plumbing – so gas work is inside the same permit requirement.	
Solar PV	Due at permit issuance	Not published — INSTANT APPROVAL IS NOT INSTANT INSPECTION – SolarAPP+ issues the permit, the inspection still follows.	
Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)	Due at permit issuance	Not published — A PRE-APPROVED PLAN IS NOT A PRE-APPROVED SITE. Fresno resolves fire access and water supply when 'the ADU pre-construction site (or plot) plans are submitted for review and approval' – the plan choice does not settle it.	

Good to know

- PERMITS EXPIRE ON A 180-DAY CLOCK. Fresno quotes the code: 'Every permit issued shall become invalid unless work on the site authorized by such permit is commenced within 180 days after its issuance, or if the work is suspended or abandoned for a period of 180 days after the time the work is commenced.' An APPROVED INSPECTION resets it to 180 days from that inspection.
- A PERMIT CAN DIE OUTRIGHT: 'If a permit has no activity for a period of one year or more, the permit will become null and void and new permits will be required at full fees.' Short of that, renewal costs 'a renewal fee equal to 25% of the original permit fee.'

Long Beach

Los Angeles County · City of Long Beach – Community Development Department, Building and Safety Bureau
562.570.PMIT (7648) · <https://www.longbeach.gov/lbcd/building/>

Permit	Fee	Review timeline	Tip
Residential Building (New Construction)	Per the City's published fee schedules	Not published — PERMITS DIE ON A 90-DAY CLOCK, NOT THE 180 DAYS SOME CALIFORNIA CITIES USE: 'Permits become null and void if work authorized is not commenced within 90 days of the issuance or if such work is suspended or abandoned at any time after the work is commenced for a period of 90 days.'	
Electrical	Per the City's published fee schedules	Not published — PERMITS DIE ON A 90-DAY CLOCK, NOT THE 180 DAYS SOME CALIFORNIA CITIES USE: 'Permits become null and void if work authorized is not commenced within 90 days of the issuance or if such work is suspended or abandoned at any time after the work is commenced for a period of 90 days.'	
Plumbing	Per the City's published fee schedules	Not published — PERMITS DIE ON A 90-DAY CLOCK, NOT THE 180 DAYS SOME CALIFORNIA CITIES USE: 'Permits become null and void if work authorized is not commenced within 90 days of the issuance or if such work is suspended or abandoned at any time after the work is commenced for a period of 90 days.'	
Mechanical / HVAC	Per the City's published fee schedules	Not published — PERMITS DIE ON A 90-DAY CLOCK, NOT THE 180 DAYS SOME CALIFORNIA CITIES USE: 'Permits become null and void if work authorized is not commenced within 90 days of the issuance or if such work is suspended or abandoned at any time after the work is commenced for a period of 90 days.'	
Solar PV	Not offered / not tracked for this city		
Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)	Per the City's published fee schedules	Not published — AN ADU IS AN OTC PROJECT HERE, WHICH MEANS IN PERSON, NOT ONLINE. The review happens at the counter during the appointment.	

Good to know

- PERMITS DIE ON A 90-DAY CLOCK, NOT THE 180 DAYS SOME CALIFORNIA CITIES USE: 'Permits become null and void if work authorized is not commenced within 90 days of the issuance or if such work is suspended or abandoned at any time after the work is commenced for a period of 90 days.'
- A COMBINATION PERMIT EXISTS SO A MULTI-TRADE JOB IS NOT FOUR APPLICATIONS – it covers all building, electrical, plumbing and/or mechanical work. Long Beach names the four separately AND offers the combined one; pick deliberately.

Oakland

Alameda County · City of Oakland – Planning & Building Department

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/My-Household/Building-and-Remodeling/Homeowner-Projects-Permits>

Permit	Fee	Review timeline	Tip
Residential Building (New Construction)	NOT PUBLISHED on the pages read	Not published – contact the department	THE BUNDLING RULE IS CONDITIONAL AND OAKLAND STATES IT: 'If you're building or remodeling a house, duplex, or ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) , the MEP work should be included in a Residential Building Combination Permit (RBC) , so you won't need separate MEP permits.' Outside that case the trades are separate permits.
Electrical	NOT PUBLISHED on the pages read	Not published – contact the department	THE BUNDLING RULE IS CONDITIONAL AND OAKLAND STATES IT: 'If you're building or remodeling a house, duplex, or ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) , the MEP work should be included in a Residential Building Combination Permit (RBC) , so you won't need separate MEP permits.' Outside that case the trades are separate permits.
Plumbing	NOT PUBLISHED on the pages read	Not published – contact the department	THE BUNDLING RULE IS CONDITIONAL AND OAKLAND STATES IT: 'If you're building or remodeling a house, duplex, or ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) , the MEP work should be included in a Residential Building Combination Permit (RBC) , so you won't need separate MEP permits.' Outside that case the trades are separate permits.
Mechanical / HVAC	NOT PUBLISHED on the pages read	Not published – contact the department	THE BUNDLING RULE IS CONDITIONAL AND OAKLAND STATES IT: 'If you're building or remodeling a house, duplex, or ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) , the MEP work should be included in a Residential Building Combination Permit (RBC) , so you won't need separate MEP permits.' Outside that case the trades are separate permits.
Solar PV	Not offered / not tracked for this city		
Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)	NOT PUBLISHED on the pages read	Not published – contact the department	OAKLAND HAS AN ADU AMNESTY PROGRAMME, WHICH IS UNUSUAL. For a unit built without permits it offers amnesty from Planning Code violations and a 'Delay in enforcement action for unpermitted ADUs like fines, penalties, and orders to remove, modify, or alter your ADU, giving you an opportunity to address code violations'.

Good to know

- THE BUNDLING RULE IS CONDITIONAL AND OAKLAND STATES IT: 'If you're building or remodeling a house, duplex, or ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) , the MEP work should be included in a Residential Building Combination Permit (RBC) , so you won't need separate MEP permits.' Outside that case the trades are separate permits.
- MOST MEP PERMITS NEED NO PLANS AT ALL - 'Most MEP permits do not need plans .' Plan Review is optional and costs extra, EXCEPT for cannabis growing or processing where it is required.

Sacramento

Sacramento County · City of Sacramento – Community Development Department, Building Division
916-264-5011 · <https://www.cityofsacramento.gov/community-development/building>

Permit	Fee		Review timeline	Tip
Residential Building (New Construction)	Published separately in the City's build — full text at source	Not published — contact the department	— THE EXAMPLE LIST IS THE USEFUL PART. Landscape irrigation, window replacements and fences all appear on Sacramento's own list of work needing a permit — none of them is obvious.	
Electrical	See the City's average minor permit cost — full text at source	Not published — contact the department	— HOMEOWNERS GET A SHORTER LIST THAN CONTRACTORS. Sacramento lets homeowners pull only three minor permits online for single-family or duplex — 'Residential re-roof Residential HVAC change out Residential Water Heater change out' — while a California licensed contractor can pull the full set.	
Plumbing	See the City's average minor permit cost — full text at source	Not published — contact the department	— HOMEOWNERS GET A SHORTER LIST THAN CONTRACTORS. Sacramento lets homeowners pull only three minor permits online for single-family or duplex — 'Residential re-roof Residential HVAC change out Residential Water Heater change out' — while a California licensed contractor can pull the full set.	
Mechanical / HVAC	See the City's average minor permit cost — full text at source	Not published — contact the department	— THE HVAC ONLINE SCOPE STOPS AT TWO FAMILY DWELLINGS. Anything larger is outside the minor permit route.	
Solar PV	Invoiced on approval	Not published — contact the department	— THE UTILITY LETTER IS PART OF THE PERMIT SUBMITTAL, not a later step — Sacramento asks for the SMUD interconnection letter up front.	
Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)	NOT PUBLISHED in the ADU handout	Not published — contact the department	— TWO ADUs ARE ALLOWED BUT THEY SHARE ONE FLOOR-AREA BUDGET. The City's own worked example is two detached units of 400 and 800 square feet totalling 1,200.	

Good to know

- HOMEOWNERS MAY PULL ONLY THREE MINOR PERMITS ONLINE — residential re-roof, residential HVAC change out and residential water heater change out, for single-family or duplex. A California licensed contractor can pull the full minor list including electrical and plumbing scopes.
- THE ONLINE HVAC SCOPE IS LIMITED TO ONE AND TWO FAMILY DWELLING UNITS, stated in the scope line itself.

San Diego

San Diego County · City of San Diego – Development Services Department (DSD)

619-446-5000 · <https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services>

Permit	Fee	Review timeline	Tip
Residential Building (New Construction)	\$737.00	Not published —	THE EXEMPTION LIST IS A MUNICIPAL CODE SECTION, NOT A WEB PAGE. SDMC 129.0203 is where San Diego publishes what does not need a building permit; the City links to it rather than restating it.
Electrical	Per Information Bulletin 103	Not published —	A HOMEOWNER CAN HOLD THE PERMIT, BUT ONLY AS OWNER OR LESSEE. The City limits issuance to a licensed California State Contractor authorized to perform electrical installations, or to the property owner or lessee - there is no third category.
Plumbing	Per Information Bulletin 103	Not published —	GAS IS NOT A SEPARATE PERMIT HERE. San Diego names one Plumbing/Gas Permit, so do not go looking for a standalone gas permit.
Mechanical / HVAC	Per Information Bulletin 103	Not published —	REPAIR IS INSIDE THE TRIGGER. The prohibition names installed, altered, replaced AND repaired - a repair is not outside the permit requirement.
Solar PV	Not offered / not tracked for this city		
Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)	\$737.00	Not published —	THERE IS NO SMALL-ADU EXEMPTION HERE. San Diego says there are no exemptions at all, which is stronger than the usual size or valuation threshold.

Good to know

- CHECK SDMC 129.0203 BEFORE APPLYING. It is the City's exemption list for building permits and is the first thing the Building Permit page tells you to read.
- HISTORIC REVIEW TRIGGERS AT 45 YEARS OF AGE ALONE - 'On a site containing a structure of 45 years or more.' - not only for designated properties or historic districts. It adds a photographic survey and a County Assessor building record, and it can also remove the simple no-plan route for trade permits.

San Jose

Santa Clara County · City of San Jose – Development Services Permit Center
408-535-3555 · <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/business/development-services-permit-center>

Permit	Fee	Review timeline	Tip
Residential Building (New Construction)	NOT PUBLISHED on the permit service contact the page — full text at department source	Not published —	SAN JOSE IS ONE OF THE FEW CITIES THAT PUBLISHES REVIEW DURATIONS AT ALL, and it dates the page. Treat the numbers as approximate days for staff review, not as a promise of permit issuance.
Electrical	NOT PUBLISHED on the online permits contact the page	Not published —	THE 400 AMP LIMIT COMES WITH THREE MORE CONDITIONS – like-for-like, same location, and no alterations to exterior finishes. Any one of them broken takes the job off the online route.
Plumbing	NOT PUBLISHED on the online permits contact the page	Not published —	READ THE PERMIT NAME FOR BUNDLING. Two of San Jose's gas entries say in the name that they include the mechanical AND plumbing permits – pulling a separate one would be duplication.
Mechanical / HVAC	NOT PUBLISHED on the online permits contact the page	Not published —	HEAT PUMPS ARE NAMED WITH THEIR CONDENSATE – the City lists 'Heat Pump including condensate', so the condensate work is inside the same permit rather than a separate one.
Solar PV	NOT PUBLISHED on the online permits contact the page	Not published —	ONLINE DOES NOT MEAN NO PLANS FOR SOLAR. San Jose names solar and earthquake retrofit as the exceptions where plans are required and reviewed in the field.
Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)	NOT PUBLISHED on the ADU page	Not published —	SAN JOSE ALLOWS TINY HOMES ON WHEELS AS AN ADU. This is the opposite of several Oregon cities, where an ADU must be a permanently built structure and cannot be on wheels. Do not carry an assumption about THOWs across a state line.

Good to know

- SAN JOSE PUBLISHES PLAN REVIEW TIME FRAMES, which is unusual – approximate days by scope of work, dated on the page. They apply ONLY to the Standard Plan Review Service.
- FOR SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES THE MEP REVIEWS HAPPEN IN THE FIELD, not at plan check, by the assigned building inspector. That is why those cells in the published table are dashes.

Sources & verification

Every figure in this guide traces to one of the official sources below, grouped by city.

Fresno

<https://www.fresno.gov/planning/building-and-safety/>

<https://www.fresno.gov/planning/building-and-safety/building-permit-center/>

Long Beach

<https://www.longbeach.gov/lbcd/building/>

<https://www.longbeach.gov/lbcd/building/permit-center/building-permits/>

Oakland

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/My-Household/Building-and-Remodeling/Homeowner-Projects-Permits>

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/My-Household/Building-and-Remodeling/Homeowner-Projects-Permits/Mechanical-Electrical-Plumbing-MEP-Permits>

<https://www.oaklandca.gov/My-Household/Building-and-Remodeling/Homeowner-Projects-Permits/Accessory-Dwelling-Units-ADUs>

Sacramento

<https://www.cityofsacramento.gov/community-development/building>

<https://www.cityofsacramento.gov/community-development/building/permit-services/required-permits>

<https://www.cityofsacramento.gov/community-development/building/permit-services/minor-permits>

<https://www.cityofsacramento.gov/community-development/building/permit-services/residential-solar>

[https://www.cityofsacramento.gov/content/dam/portal/cdd/Building/Forms/CDD-O423_Accessory-Dwelling-Units-\(ADU\)-Handout.pdf](https://www.cityofsacramento.gov/content/dam/portal/cdd/Building/Forms/CDD-O423_Accessory-Dwelling-Units-(ADU)-Handout.pdf)

San Diego

<https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services>

<https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/permits/building-permit>

<https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/permits/electrical-permit>

<https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/permits/plumbing-permit>

<https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/permits/mechanical-permit>

<https://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/news-programs/programs/companion-junior-units>

San Jose

<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/business/development-services-permit-center>

<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/businesses/development-services-permit-center/building-permit-services/standard-plan-review-service/plan-review-time-frames>

<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/business/development-services-permit-center/online-permits-at-sjpermits-org/building-online-permits>

<https://www.sanjoseca.gov/business/development-services-permit-center/accessory-dwelling-units-adus>

Every figure in this guide links to a living page.

Fees, timelines, and requirements change. For the current version of every figure in this guide — plus fee-comparison and search tools for all of California — visit:

permitbase.app/california

This edition was generated on 2026-09-11 from PermitBase's live dataset and is re-issued periodically as sources change. The dated PDF you're holding is a snapshot — the URL above always reflects the current data.